

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00597 170733Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----061451 170736Z /13
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7548
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0597

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: STATEMENT BY VENEZUELAN POLITICIAN NERIO NERI MAGO ON
VISIT OF PRESIDENT CARTER

1. VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO HAITI HELD A DINNER IN HONOR OF NERIO NERI
MAGO VENEZUELAN POLITICAL LEADER WHO IS VISITING PORT-AU-PRINCE. DURING
COURSE OF CONVERSATION AMBASSADOR CASADO ASKED IF HE COULD BRING
CONGRESSMAN MAGO BY MY RESIDENCE FOR A PRIVATE CONVERSATION. I AGREED
AND THEY ARRIVED YESTERDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 15.

2. MAGO PROCEEDED TO GIVE ME A TOUR D'HORIZON OF VENEZUELAN
POLITICS WITH EMPHASIS ON THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION,
WHICH HE
SAID WOULD SURELY BE WON BY LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS THE CANDIDATE OF
COPEI.

3. MAGO SOON CAME TO WHAT EVIDENTLY WAS THE POINT OF THE VISIT AND
THAT WAS HIS VIEWS, AND THOSE OF AMBASSADOR CASADO, ON THE PLANNED
VISIT OF PRESIDENT CARTER. MAGO STATED IN BLUNT TERMS THAT HE WOULD
STRONGLY URGE THAT THE PRESIDENT NOT COME TO VENEZUELA IN APRIL OR
AT ANY TIME DURING THE ELECTION. HE SAID NEXT JANUARY WOULD BE A
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BETTER

TIME. MAGO SAID HE HAD EVIDENCE THAT "CERTAIN AMERICAN INTERESTS"
WERE
INTERFERING IN THE CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA CANDIDATE
LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ. MAGO SAID THAT IF ANY U.S. INVOLVEMENT BECOMES
KNOWN IT WILL STRENGTHEN THE EXTREME LEFT WHO HE ACCUSED OF BEING

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS.

4. AMBASSADOR CASADO JOINED IN TO SAY THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND NOT AS AMBASSADOR, HE WOULD ADVISE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER NOT COME IN APRIL. CASADO SAID HE HAD MADE SIMILAR WARNINGS YEARS AGO WHEN FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON FIRST VISITED VENEZUELA AND THEY HAD GONE UNHEEDED. CASADO SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT WASHINGTON SOMETIME THIS SPRING, AND SPEAK INFORMALLY, APART FROM THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY, TO U.S. OFFICIALS.

5. SENSING THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE TWO VENEZUELANES WERE MAKING THEIR CASE, I OFFERED NO COMMENT AND SIMPLY THANKED THEM FOR THEIR CANDOR.

6. COMMENT: IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS FOR ME TO CONVEY THEIR VIEWS TO WASHINGTON. I DO NOT FEEL COMPETENT TO EVALUATE THEIR STATEMENTS.
JONES

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